

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): ~~An apparatus~~Apparatus for use in accessing sets of information stored in an information system, the apparatus comprising ~~having~~:

a computer having a user interface providing access to at least one information retrieval tool;

a computer store for recording data relating to information retrieval by users;

monitoring means operable, on receipt from a user at said user interface of one or more search criteria for submission to said at least one information retrieval tool, to detect an indication by said user that a set of information identified by said at least one information retrieval tool using said received search criteria, is relevant, and to record said received ~~one or more~~ search criteria and an associated a reference to said relevant set of information in said store;

weighting means arranged to calculate, in respect of a set of information referenced in said store, a weighting for each search criterion recorded in association with ~~against~~ said referenced set of information, said weighting being indicative of the proportion of users who, upon using the recorded search criterion with said at least one information retrieval tool, indicated that identified said associated referenced set of information was as being relevant; ~~and~~

analysis means to identify a recorded search criterion, for use with said at least one information retrieval tool, having, for each member of a group comprising one or more sets of information referenced in said store, a weighting in excess of a predetermined threshold; and

means for providing an information retrieval tool search result output obtained by use of said identified search criterion.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): An apparatus as in ~~according to~~ Claim 1, wherein said monitoring means are arranged, in use, to detect said ~~an~~ indication by said user wherein said indication comprises ~~comprising~~ a request by said user to access a set of information identified by said at least one information retrieval tool.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): An apparatus as in ~~according to~~ Claim 1, wherein said analysis means are arranged to identify a recorded search criterion having, for each member of a first group comprising one or more sets of information selected by a user from those sets referenced in said store, a weighting in excess of said predetermined threshold.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): An apparatus as in ~~according to~~ claim 1, wherein said analysis means are further arranged to receive a search criterion from said user interface, to identify a second group comprising one or more sets of information referenced in said store for which said received search criterion has a weighting in excess of said predetermined threshold, and to identify one or more further recorded search criteria having, in respect of each member of said second group, a weighting in excess of said predetermined threshold.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): An apparatus as in ~~according to~~ claim 1, wherein said search criteria include words or word phrases and wherein said monitoring means are operable to record words from said one or more search criteria in a stemmed form.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): An apparatus as in ~~according to~~ claim 1, wherein said analysis means include grouping means to identify one or more information categories represented by sets of information referenced in said store, to associate one or more of said referenced sets of information representative of the same information category, and wherein said

analysis means are arranged to identify those recorded search criteria having, for each of said associated sets of information, a weighting in excess of said predetermined threshold.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A method of accessing sets of information stored in an information system, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

(i) detecting submission by a user of a search criterion to an information retrieval tool, and a corresponding response from the retrieval tool;

(ii) detecting an indication by the user as to the relevance of a set of information identified in the response from the retrieval tool;

(iii) storing a reference to the set of information indicated as being relevant at step (ii), and a record of the search criterion submitted by the user at step (i);

(iv) selecting one or more sets of information referenced in the store and calculating, for each search criterion recorded in respect of each of said one or more selected sets of information, a weighting indicative of the proportion of users who, on submitting the search criterion to the information retrieval tool, identified the selected set of information and indicated that it was relevant; ~~and~~

(v) identifying, in respect of said one or more selected sets of information from step (iv), a recorded search criterion having, in respect of each said selected set of information, a weighting in excess of a predetermined threshold; and

(vi) providing an information retrieval tool search result output obtained by use of said identified search criterion.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A method as in ~~according to~~ Claim 7, wherein, at step (iv), each said selected set of information is representative of the same category of information, and wherein the method includes the step:

(vii)~~(vi)~~ using said identified search criterion from step (v) to search for further sets of information in said category of information.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A method as in ~~according to~~ Claim 7, wherein, at step (ii), said indication comprises accessing a set of information identified in the response from the retrieval tool.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A method as in ~~according to~~ Claim 9, wherein, at step (ii), detecting said indication includes measuring the time spent by the user in accessing said set of information.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A method as in ~~according to~~ Claim 10, wherein, at step (iv), said weighting is adjusted according to the measurements of time spent by users in accessing the respective selected set of information.

Claim 12 (New): An apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein said group comprises at least one set of information representative of a particular category of information.

Claim 13 (New): A computerized method for searching stored information using an information retrieval tool having a user-interface for input of a user-supplied search criterion, said method comprising:

for each of plural items of stored information, maintaining a store of search criteria previously used by plural users and individually weighted to represent the proportion of prior users who are considered to have found a respectively associated stored item of information to be relevant to a particular search criterion; and

providing an information retrieval tool output to a user-input search criterion using said store of weighted search criteria.

Claim 14 (New): A method as in claim 13, wherein said weighted criteria represent a binary-valued thresholded determination of applicability.

Claim 15 (New): A computerized apparatus for searching stored information using an information retrieval tool having a user-interface for input of user-supplied search criterion, said apparatus comprising:

means for maintaining, for each of plural items of stored information, a store of search criteria previously used by plural users and individually weighted to represent the proportion prior user who are considered to have found a respectively associated stored item of information to be relevant to a particular search criterion; and

means for providing an information retrieval tool output to a user-input search criterion using said store of weighted search criteria.

Claim 16 (New): Apparatus as in claim 13, wherein said weighted criteria represent a binary-valued thresholded determination of applicability